

[He-Man From the West]

Belief & Customs - Folk Stuff

TALES - TALL

FOLKLORE

NEW YORK Forms to be Filled out for Each Interview [3?]

FORM A Circumstances of Interview

STATE NEW YORK

NAME OF WORKER WAYNE WALDEN

ADDRESS 51 Bank Street, New York

DATE October 11, 1938

SUBJECT "HE-MAN FROM THE WEST"

1. Date and time of interview

Evening of October 9, 1938

2. Place of interview

198 Richmond Terrace, Staten Island

3. Name and address of informant

Mrs. R. Ivanoff, Stony Point, N.Y.

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4. Name and address of person, if any, who put you in touch with informant.

None

5. Name and address of person, if any, accompanying you

6. Description of room, house, surroundings, etc.

Dr. and Mrs. Ivanoff own their home in Pearl River, N.Y., but as his practice is in Stony Point, they rent a large house there; house is not numbered.

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FORM B Personal History of Informant

STATE NEW YORK

NAME OF WORKER WAYNE WALDEN

ADDRESS 51 BANK STREET, New York

DATE October 11, 1933

SUBJECT "HE MAN FROM THE WEST"

1. Ancestry

Italian-American

2. Place and date of birth

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Philadelphia

3. Family

4. Places lived in, with dates

Philadelphia, Nyack, Pearl River, Stony Point

5. Education, with dates

Trained Nurse

6. Occupations and accomplishments, with dates

7. Special skills and interests

8. Community and religious activities

9. Description of informant Age uncertain; woman probably between 45-50 years. Active as nurse with her Doctor-husband.

10. Other Points gained in interview

Mrs. Ivanoff and the Doctor promised to furnish further material relative to current notions or superstitions among their patients as to cures, etc.

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NEW YORK

FORM C Text of Interview (Unedited)

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STATE NEW YORK

NAME OF WORKER WAYNE WALDEN

ADDRESS 51 Bank Street, New York

DATE October 11, 1938

SUBJECT "HE-MAN FROM THE WEST"

My informant, a registered trained nurse with many years of private and hospital experience in Philadelphia and in New York State, is now married to Doctor Stephan Ivanoff, whose residence and practice is in Stony Point, N.Y. Mrs. Ivanoff, formerly Miss Fusco, is of Italian parentage, and lived during the early part of her life in the Italian district of Philadelphia, the city in which she was born.

I have known Mrs. Ivanoff for nearly fifteen years, and during this time have often heard her tell of amusing incidents recalled from her life among poor Italians and others of heterogeneous populace of South Philadelphia.

Recently I inquired of the lady, who was on a visit to this city, if she could supply me with any reminiscences, or other material, which would be appropriate for our 'folk studies'. "Oh, I could tell a lot," she replied, "but I don't know how you could put it in acceptable manner. Some of it isn't very "proper", and some of it would be - well sort of on the queer side, pathologic stuff, scarcely fit to print. If a nurse has a sense of humor, she often sees things that strike her as being funny - but a sense of humor among nurses, or doctors, is no more common than among many other professions. I'll try and think up some of the stuff that may suit you and have it ready when I again run into town."

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"What about the superstitions," I persisted, "that you find among people relative to sure-cures, etc." "I'll give you a list of such things soon," she said; "I 2 think I can get you some good stories that are current even now around Stony Point and vicinity."

Pending the outcome of this promise I sought from Mrs. Ivanoff some reminiscences of amusing happenings of which I had previously heard her relate. "This," she said, "hasn't anything to do with hospitals, but since you mentioned something about tall tales, I'll give you this as I heard it told years ago by my brother-in-law." HE-MAN FROM THE WEST

"He had come from the West and was therefore regarded by an eight year old boy in the family as a hero, a he-man who had fought many battles with wild Indians and desperadoes. One day, when the kid kept urging him to tell about some of the great fights that he'd been in out West, this is what he told:

Well, I dunno - I aint never been the kind that went 'round looking for scraps, but I've been in a few. One that comes to mind, hardly seems worth the tellin', but it happened so quick and was finished so soon, that I almost forgot about it until you reminded me of it. It was out in Denver, when one day I walked into a saloon to get a drink. I noticed that there was a long line-up at the bar, but didn't notice till I bellied up that it was a bunch of old-time heavyweights. There was Jim Jeffries and Jack Johnson and Jim Corbett and Bob Fitzsimmons and John L. Sullivan and a lot of others includin' a bunch of lighter weights, all tuff guys too. Well, that was alright. I wasn't mad at nobody, so I just stood there friendly like, waitin' for my beer, while the barkeep was tendin' to these other guys. Finally, when he did get around to me and starts to hand me my schooner, one of these here blokes - Sullivan or Jeffries - I forget just which of 'em it was - reaches out to grab it away from me. I was kinda hot-tempered in those days, so with that I lets loose and pops him 3 one. Well he, of course, falls back and knocks against the guy next to him, and that one falls over spilling the guy next to him. Anyhow they all went tumbling down like a bunch of stood-up dominoes. By that time I had finished the beer and I walked out of the place. There was a mule hitched just outside the door and he happened to be one of them kicking kind. He

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figured, I guess, that he might as well take a kick at me as anybody so, sure enough, he started in. But me being still kind of sore about what happened inside the saloon, I caught that mule's foot, when he kicked out at me, and bit the darned thing plumb off." But that was a bit too tall a one for the kid. It probably should have been toned down a bit, because even he half-suspected it was a lie.